



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 523

Chairperson: Joel Johnson
Committee: Health and Human Services
Date of Hearing: February 21, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

The goals of this legislation are to:

- Meet the growing need for services that allow elderly and disabled persons to stay as long as possible in their homes and living independently
- Stabilize the workforce providing home care services
- Improve the quality of services provided
- Specifically address those workers paid through Medicaid dollars
- Provide for background checks of workers to insure the safety of vulnerable consumers
- Create a referral registry of workers
- Oversee or provide training of home care workers
- Provide workers and consumers a voice in the process
- Slow the growth of future state spending on long-term care needs

LB 523 creates the Quality Home Care Council to oversee independent providers of home health care services who are paid with public funds and to assure quality of services to consumers who are often vulnerable.

LB 523 does the following:

- Establishes the Quality Home Care Council.
- Provides for staffing of the Council under Nebraska Health and Human Services System.
- Sets out the structure of the nine-member Council, appointed by the Governor, to include consumers of home care services, advocates for the elderly and disabled, a representative from HHSS, a representative of the statewide independent living council and a representative from an area agency on aging.
- Authorizes the Council to establish qualifications and reasonable standards for accountability for home care workers, to recruit qualified home care workers, to provide for training of home care workers, to establish a referral registry, provide a mechanism for removal from the registry workers not meeting standards and to set economic benefits for certain home care workers in consultation with the department.
- Requires home care workers paid through the department to participate in the referral registry.
- Establishes the consumer's right to hire or terminate any home care worker and gives them a mechanism for voicing concerns to the Council.

- Establishes the Council as employer of publicly paid home care workers for purposes of collective bargaining and places the relationship between worker and Council under the Industrial Relations Act.
- Requires the Council to submit one and three-year budgets to the department detailing the plan of action and expected costs.
- Requires a performance audit in 2011 and every three years after that date.
- Allows the Council to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out this Act.

Principal Introducer:

_____ **Senator Ray Aguilar**